

Museum, and Codex Linaiticus, discovered and published by Tischendorf. Codex Regius or Ephraemi belongs to the sixth, and Codex Bezae, given by the reformer of that name to the University of Cambridge, belongs also to the sixth, or, in the opinion of Westcott, to the fifth century.

On comparing all these manuscripts with each other, it is ascertained that not one single copy exists which is altogether perfect, having preserved in every letter the original reading. But it is also ascertained that no material change in the books of the Bible have been made these 1500 years; for the manuscripts take us as far back as the 4th century after Christ.

As we reach the time of the earliest manuscripts we must search for evidence from the ecclesiastical writers whose works are still extant. Such authors have quoted largely from the Scriptures, and their quotations are always made with great care, preserving the words and sentences as they found them in the copies of the inspired books before them. Their quotations are very numerous. Dr. Bentley has proved that, from the ecclesiastical authors who flourished before the 7th century, the whole text of the New Testament could be recovered, although the originals are all lost. In not less than 180 ecclesiastical writers, all belonging to the early age of the church, and whose works are still extant, these quotations are found. Theodoret of Cyrus, in Syria, has written on the epistles of Paul and on most of the Old Testament. He flourished in the 5th century. Before him Cyril of Alexandria wrote on the Prophets and on John. Chrysostom, in the 4th century, wrote his commentaries on the whole of the New Testament. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries we meet with the writings of Origen and Theophilus; only fragments of these writings, however, now remain. Irenaeus and Clement, of Alexandria, are also noted writers of the 2nd century.

We can thus trace the books of the New Testament as far back as 200 years after Christ and ascertain that their contents then were materially the same as now.

The Old Testament we can trace still farther back. The Targum, of Onkelos, translates the Pentateuch into Chaldaic Hebrew of the purest order about sixty years before Christ. The Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets and historical books is supposed to have been written about the commencement of our era.

Ancient versions of the Scriptures corroborate the evidence of the genuineness of the New Testament and carry that of the Old still farther back. A version of the Bible of great critical value was published in the 9th century in the Slavonic or Russian tongue. In the 6th century a version of the whole Bible in Georgian was completed. In the fifth century, Mesrop, the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, superintended a publication of the Bible into Armenian. A Gothic version, a copy of which,

though defective, is found in the library of the university of Upsala, and which was made by Bishop Ulfilas, also belongs to the fifth century. In the third and fourth centuries the whole of the New Testament and parts of the Old were translated into Coptic, the language of lower Egypt, for the use of Egyptian Christians; also in Sahidic, the language of Upper Egypt. In the fourth century we find a translation in Ethiopic, the language then spoken in the modern Abyssinia. None of these translations, however, are known to have been made from the original writings of the inspired authors. Several were made from the Septuagint, some from the Syriac, and a few from the Latin Vulgate.

This Vulgate is a translation of the Bible into Latin, made by Jerome about the year 385 A. D. Part of it, including the New Testament, is taken from an older Latin version known as the old Italic, which is quoted by Tertullian, 220; but the greater part Jerome translated from the Hebrew. It is the first book ever printed, and although its present text is very corrupt, it is considered by the Catholic church superior to the Greek and Hebrew versions now extant.

The Peshito or literal Syriac version of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures is thought to belong to the first century. It was in general use among the Syrian churches in the year 378. This version is, as its name implies, very literal and as such is of great critical value.

Other ancient versions were made by Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion, and the Seventy. Origen possessed the whole of these, 228 A. D. He copied them all in his so-called Helopla or six-columned Bible, and wrote the Hebrew text in both Hebrew and Greek letters. This gigantic work of Origen formed altogether fifty volumes, but was unfortunately lost—probably at the sacking of Caesarea by the Saracens, 635 A. D. Fortunately, Eusebius had copied the column which contained the Septuagint, together with the corrections made by Origen. This Eusebius copy was published by Montfaucon at Paris, 1714.

The version of the Seventy, the Septuagint, is the most ancient of all. It was from the first generally received both by Jews and Christians, and is frequently quoted by writers of the New Testament as authentic, even where its reading varies from the Hebrew. It is thought to have been completed 285 years before Christ. Aristeas, a writer who represents himself as a friend of the Egyptian King, Ptolemy Philadelphus, says that this version was made by seventy-two Jews, six of each tribe. They are said to have completed their work in seventy-two days. Miraculous interposition and infallibility are also claimed for this version by the early writers.

Here our traces are lost. We can go no further back with historical certainty. In the case of the New Testament we have gone as far back as 200 years after Christ, and in that of the Old Testament as far as

300 years before Christ. That at that time many Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were extant of a much more ancient date, no scholar will deny, only they have been destroyed or otherwise made inaccessible to us. Our Bibles, therefore, are not the identical copies penned by the inspired authors; nor are they "second hand," copied immediately from the first manuscripts. The text of our present Bible is the result of a comparison between hundreds of from each other slightly varying manuscripts, versions and quotations. Learned men have carefully, on strictly scientific principles, rejected all that could be proved to be spurious, and filled in all that could be proved to be genuine, as far as this possibly could be ascertained. Our Bible translations today are very faithful translations of this purified Greek or Hebrew scripture text.

It has already been stated that thousands of manuscripts have been examined in order to form a correct text. These manuscripts are all more or less erroneous, although the errors very seldom affect the sense materially. It may help to form a correct idea of the nature of the discrepancies if a few examples are submitted:

In Genesis, 14: 5, some MSS. read "with them" (behem) instead of "in Ham" (becham). In 1st Kings, 1: 18, the English version has "and now" (ve'atta), but many manuscripts read "and thou" (veatta). In Jonah, 1: 9, "I am a Hebrew" (Ivri) is the reading of most MSS., but others have "I am the servant of Jehovah." (Ivdi J.) In Ephesians iv: 19, some MSS. have "past hope" (apelpikotes), instead of "past feeling" (apelgekotes). 1 Peter, ii: 3, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," should, according to some be: "that the Lord is Christ." ("Chrestos," gracious, has been adopted instead of the Greek "Christos"). Sometimes a misspelling made in a MS. seems to have been purposely retained throughout. Thus the Hebrew word for a boy (na-ar), stands for a girl (na-ar), twenty-one times in the Pentateuch, and sometimes copyists have added to the text, in order to make it conform to a parallel passage, as seemed good to the copyist. The expression "to heal the brokenhearted," Luke iv: 18, is probably taken from Isaiah lxi: 1, and inserted into the Gospel by someone who wished to improve the text. Some passages have been wilfully altered to serve party purposes. In Deuteronomy xxvii: 4, the Hebrew has "Ebal," but the Samaritans changed this into "Gerisim," no doubt in order to find a ground for erecting a temple on the Mount Gerisim. In Judges xviii: 30, "Manasseh" is written in many MSS., instead of Moses, the idea being thereby to save the honor of Moses and his family. Isaiah lxiv: 4 has been very much changed, and is, as it now reads, admitted to be unintelligible. It is quoted in 1 Corinthians ii: 9. In Matthew i: 18, "before they came together," and the words "firstborn," have been omitted in many MSS. and versions in order to rid the pas-